



Wang Yani
1975-
*** Painter * China**

by Amelie Welden

When you pick up a brush, don't ever ask anyone for help. Because the most wonderful thing about painting is being left alone with your own imagination. I do not paint to get praise from others, but to play a game of endless joy. —Wang Yani

Wang Shiqiang couldn't believe his eyes—his painting was ruined! And the culprit? His two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Yani. She had gotten into his oil paints while he was gone and used them to create her own “masterpiece”—right over her father's careful brush strokes. Wang Shiqiang was angry at first, but Yani explained, “Papa, I was helping you paint. I want to paint and paint.” At that moment, Wang Shiqiang knew that his daughter's talent and desire would make her an amazing artist.

Wang Yani was born in Gongcheng, a small town in southern China. She expressed an interest in painting at a very young age, and her father, an art teacher and a painter, gave her the materials she needed. By the time she was three years old, Yani had already created paintings in the bold, dynamic style that would characterize all her work.

- 3 This young, inspired artist was only four years old when she held her first art exhibition in Shanghai. By age six, Yani had completed over four thousand paintings, and when she was eight, one



of her paintings was made into a Chinese postage stamp.

Over the next few years, Yani's work was shown throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. Then, in 1989, she achieved something truly unheard of in the art world: at just fourteen years of age, she became the youngest person ever to have a one-person show at the famous Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Her exhibition was called “Yani: The Brush of Innocence.”

- 5 Amazingly, Yani has never had any formal art training or painting classes. She paints just because she loves it. Her painting has been called “fresh” and “vigorous.” Although her style is unique, she paints with traditional Chinese materials: brushes, inks, pigments, and special paper. Yani relies on her memory of real life experiences for inspiration, but she also uses her imagination to bring the paintings to life.



Before starting a painting, Yani tries to clear her mind. Often she listens to music while she works—Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is her favorite. After deciding what to paint, Yani begins to work, sweeping her brush smoothly across the paper.

Usually it takes Yani about thirty or forty minutes to complete a painting. When she’s done, she marks the painting with her personal red seal, which, like the signature, identifies Yani as the artist.

Yani’s favorite subjects in her early paintings were animals, especially cats and monkeys. She paints these animals playing and being mischievous. Yani’s

later work portrays landscapes and people, and many of her paintings tell a story. She often uses her art as a way to communicate. Once, to show her mom that she was hungry, Yani painted a picture of a monkey eating fruit.

Yani devotes a lot of her time to painting. Even when she was in school, Yani managed to paint about three pictures a day. But she also made time for her other hobbies and interests, like singing, dancing, reading, writing, sports, and music. Yani’s talent has brought her international acclaim, but it’s her love for painting that inspires her to keep creating new work.

1

In paragraph 3, the author *most likely* uses the word *inspired* instead of *motivated* to emphasize the —

- A** unusual style of Yani’s work
- B** connections Yani has to other artists
- C** early start to Yani’s career
- D** delight painting brings to Yani

2

Think about one of Wang Yani’s qualities. Explain how someone you know or have read about also has that quality. Use information from the article to support your answer. Write your answer on your answer document.



Reading Comprehension

3

What advice would Yani probably give to young people? Use details from both the article and the quotation to support your answer. Write your answer on your answer document.

4

Which of these ideas would be *most* important to include in a summary of this article?

- A** The reaction of Yani's father when she ruined his painting
- B** The sources of Yani's inspiration for her paintings
- C** Yani's age when her painting was made into a postage stamp
- D** Yani's use of a personal seal to sign her paintings